(c) if so, the time-frame thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The question does not arise.

Arrears of sugarcane growers

973. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FO@D AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether sugarcane growers in different States, particularly Uttar Pradesh have been agitating for payment of arrears of sugarcane dues by the sugar mills;

(b) if so, the arrears of payment of sugarcane dues as on January, 2003, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by the Central Government and respective State Governments for clearance of these dues and the details of the dues settled, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) As per the information received from the Government of Uttar Pradesh, there had been one incident at Munderwa, District Basti during agitation by sugarcane farmers.

(b) and (c) Statement showing the State-wise sugarcane price arrears position upto 2001 -2002 sugar season and 2002-2003 season are given in the Statement I and II respectively, *(see* below)

The Central Government, on its part, besides writing to the Chief Ministers of States from time to time for expeditious clearance of the same, has taken various steps to improve the financial health of sugar industry with a view to enabling it to reduce the sugarcane price arrears:

(i) The levy obligation of sugar factories has been reduced to 10%

w.e.f., 01.03.2002 which has enable the sugar factories to sell more sugar under free-sale quota in the open market to obtain better realization.

(ii) The sugar factories have been provided temporary relief by way of permitting them to sell equivalent quantity of unlifted levy sugar stocks as free sale sugar in the open market during the sugar season 2001 -2002, a quantity of 221513.7 of unlifted levy sugar stocks were permitted to be sold as free sale sugar.

(iii) Export of sugar has been allowed without any quantitative restrictions. In order to encourage exports of sugar, the Sugar Development Fund (SDF) Act, 1982 and the SDF Rules, 1983 have been amended to neutralise the internal transport and ocean freight disadvantage.

(iv) A Buffer stock of 20 lakh tonnes has been created so as to enable the sugar mills to get a subsidy amount of Rs. 412 crores from the Sugar Development Fund. In Addition, an amount of Rs. 374 crores would be available from the banks to the mills on account of additional margin money. Thus, a total amount of Rs. 786 crores would be provided to the sugar mills enabling them to clear the payment of surgarcane price dues to the sugarcane growers.

Statement-I

State-wise sugarcane Price Arrears Position upto 2001 -2002 *Sugar Season (as on* 31.1.2003)

(Rs. in crores)

SI.	No. State	Arrears upto 2001 -2002 sugar season
1	Uttar Pradesh	343.01
2	Punjab	65.47
3	Gujarat	4.45
4	Karnataka	52.71
5	Uttaranchal	7.35
6	Bihar	48.38
7	Tamil Nadu	7.32
8	Haryana	16.03

SI. No.	State	Arrears upto 2001 -2002 sugar season
9	Andhra Pradesh	1.96
10	Maharashtra	47.83
11	Orissa	4.06
12	Madhya Pradesh	6.03
13	Pondicherry	0.14
14	Assam	0.14
15	West Bengal	0.01
16	Rajasthan	1.18
17	Goa	—
18	Kerala	1.28
	TOTAL:	607.35

Statement II

State-wise Position of sugarcane Price Arrears for 2002-2003 *Season* upto 31-12-2002

(Fig in Lakh Rs.)

State/Zone	Sugarcane Price Arrean as on 31 /12/2002
Punjab	12,238.04
Haryana	4,359.17
Rajasthan	0.00
West UP	2,056.76
Central UP	3,134.98
East UP	728.73
Total UP	5,920.47
Uttaranchal	355.80
Madhya Pradesh	0.00
South Gujarat	3,852.00
Saurashtra	294.74
Total Gujarat	4,146.74
South Maharashtra	3,666.71
North Maharashtra	4,715.90
Central Maharashtra	4,524.24
Total Maharashtra	12,906.85
North Bihar	100.12
South Bihar	0.00
Total Bihar	100.12

State/Zone	Sugarcane Price Arrears as on 31 /12/2002
Assam	0.00
Andhra Pradesh	12,292.53
Karnataka	23,082.00
Tamil Nadu	10,764.70
Kerala	177.00
Orissa	247.77
West Bengal	249.28
Nagaland	0.00
Pondicherry	32.31
Goa	84.72
ALL INDIA TOTAL:	86,957.50

Testing of Mineral Water

†974. DR. ABRAR AHMED:
SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA:
PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY:
SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item under the caption "Mineral Water Ke Naya Manak Tai Karane Mei Juta Bureau" published in the 'Rashtriya Sahara' dated the 9th February, 2003;

(b) whether the Bureau of Indian Standards is contemplating to set new standards for testing of mineral water;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the remedial action proposed by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has already evolved

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.